

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 0169

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: CG, US, PGOV, PFOR, SEDV

SUBJECT: POLITICAL OPPOSITION AT THE UNIVERSITY

REF: KINSHASA 0168

1. USIS-SPONSORED PROFESSOR WAHL'S LECTURE ON PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S PROSPECTIVE AFRICAN POLICY (REFTEL) FILLED A LARGE LECTURE HALL AT UNAZA YESTERDAY, JANUARY 5, AND WAS FOLLOWED BY A PROVOCATIVE SERIES OF QUESTIONS, THE FINAL ONE POSED BY RETIRED PROFESSOR NGOMA, FORMER VICE-RECTOR AT THE LUBUMBASHI CAMPUS. RECALLING WAHL'S PREFATORY REMARK ABOUT HIS PLEASURE, FOLLOWING VISITS TO SENEGAL, IVORY COAST AND CAMEROON, IN HAVING SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST, NGOMA WONDERED IF WAHL MEANT THAT HE FOUND ZAIRE'S ECONOMIC PROCESS MORE IMPRESSIVE THAN THAT OF THE IVORY COAST, OR ZAIRE'S POLITICAL PROCESS, INCLUDING ANIMATION AND ELECTION BY ACCLAMATION, MORE ADVANCED THAN WHAT HE HAD RECENTLY WITNESSED IN THE US. NGOMA CONTINUED IN THIS VEIN, ACCOMPANIED BY A RISING CHORUS OF LAUGHTER FROM THE AUDIENCE, AND THEN ALLOWED WAHL TO SLIP OFF THE HOOK WITH CONSUMMATE GRACE.

2. ONCE OUTSIDE THE HALL ON THE WAY TO THE FACULTY CLUB, HOWEVER, WAHL WAS ASKED BY A LAW PROFESSOR WHY HE HAD AVOIDED THE QUESTION
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OF GREATEST INTEREST TO HIS AUDIENCE: WOULD THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, AS ONE ASPECT OF A MORE PROGRESSIVE POLICY TOWARD AFRICA, STOP PROPPING UP THE HOPELESSLY CORRUPT AND INCOMPETENT MOBUTU REGIME? AT THE FACULTY CLUB ESSENTIALLY THE SAME QUESTION WAS PUT BY THE NUMBER THREE MAN IN THE UNAZA ADMINISTRATION AND SEVERAL OTHERS, WHILE AN AZAP CORRESPONDENT BERATED AN EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER FOR THE US FAILURE EITHER TO DISPOSE OF MOBUTU

AS IT HAD OF DIEM, OR AT LEAST TO CUT OFF ALL ASSISTANCE TO THE
REGIME IMMEDIATELY. REASONED OBJECTIONS MADE BY WAHL AND EMBOFF
WERE MET WITH DISAPPOINTMENT BY ZAIRIANS.

3. COMMENT: OPPOSITION TO THE MOBUTU REGIME IS HARDLY NEW TO THE
CAMPUS. SEASONED OBSERVERS WERE NEVERTHELESS SURPRISED BY THE
DEGREE OF OPEN CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF THE PRESENCE
OF JMPR REPRESENTATIVES. DESPITE HIS REPEATED INSISTENCE TO
THE CONTRARY, WAHL CLEARLY WAS VIEWED BY MANY AT UNAZA AS AN
EMISSARY OF PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER OR, AT A MINIMUM, AS A
PRIVILEGED CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION
WHICH THEY WERE EAGER TO EXPLOIT.
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